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The Church in the Community

Definitions of Christian Co-operation

BY

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MISSIONS COUNCIL

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PREFACE

This little pamphlet is essentially a reprint, somewhat recast and with additions, of a little pamphlet published in 1916, entitled "Inner and Outer Circles of Co-operation."

The author has been identified with movements relating to co-operation and federation for more than twenty-five years, first in the State of Maine, connected with the Interdenominational Commission of Maine, the oldest state federation in the country, and then with the movements which have culminated in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and kindred organizations. He was the first Chairman of the Commission on State and Local Federations of the Federal Council, and portions of this pamphlet were embodied in a report made by that Commission to the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches at its meeting in Columbus, Ohio, December 8-10, 1915. Several thousand copies of the little pamphlet have been distributed under its former title. It is available now gratuitously to all who will be helped by it, and will apply to the writer.

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New York City

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THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY
OR THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST
ORGANIZED WITH REFERENCE TO
GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

New Testament Churches

New Testament churches appear to have been geographical. The church at Corinth, for example, was a Community Church. There may have been separate congregations meeting in the house of Stephanas, or in the house of Gaius, or in the house of Phebe, or possibly in the house of Erastus, "the chamberlain of the city." It is possible that when some said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," they worshipped in separate congregations; but it is evident that in Paul's mind, however much the disciples may have been divided, either because of convenience, or by reason of factions, they all constituted one church, the Community Church of Corinth; they constituted the Church for a definite geographical area; for Paul writes his first epistle "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's;" and in his second epistle takes even a wider geographical range, writing "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia."

In like manner the church at Thessalonica, the church at Colosse, the church at Laodicea, and the church at Rome, appear to include all of the Christians within these municipalities.

Lineal Development

Because of the development of Christian denominations, the consciousness of Christian fellowship, now manifest in cities and towns, is generally what may be called lineal, rather than lateral. Most Christians, under the impulses of denominational nurture and growth, look backward, in terms of fellowship, unto a John Wesley, or a Robert Browne, or a Roger Williams, or an Alexander Campbell, or an Emanuel Swedenborg, or an Ulrich Zwingli, or a John Calvin, or a Martin Luther,—or back to the Apostles. Peter preëminently, or to them all, in “apostolic succession.” This consciousness of fellowship has tended to cut channels between rigid barriers, restricting the expression of fellowship to limited lines, through the present unto the future. The primitive church appears to have had no such restrictions. It certainly had no such inheritances from the past. Its fellowship was lateral, including all who “bore the Name,” or were “of the Way,” within any area. This sense of lateral fellowship is being recovered. It is the genius of the present movement toward federation.

Lateral Development

The Federal Council is an expression of an attempt to recover fellowship laterally in the domain of the nation. The Commissions of the Federal Council, notably those on The Church and Social Service, on Federated Movements, and on the Church and Rural Life, are all engaged either in the more adequate expression of these lateral fellowships, or in the active promotion of combination and coöperation between Christians, geographically and locally approximated.

A striking feature of the literary output of the last score of years has been the discussion of unity, not within denominational lines, but outside of, and inclusive of, denominations. A sense of brotherhood has taken hold of the Christian church. This is an outstanding characteristic of the day, and must be reck-

oned with. No Christian, no church, no denomination can hold itself aloof from other Christians, other churches, and other denominations, in the old spirit of sectarianism. None are sole receptacles of the divine gifts; no one is the single agency through which the spirit works; all are required, for the recognition and the proclamation of the "many-colored" Gospel. This consciousness has been emphasized by the world war.

The Two-Fold Problem, Lineal and Lateral

The problem before Christians to-day is double—(1) How to preserve the inherited fellowships, organizations and possessions from the past which are largely in denominational organizations; and (2) How to re-establish, in the spirit of the New Testament, the consciousness of fellowship and unity which may dominate a single community.

The Federal Council and Federation

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, organized in 1908, "more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America, in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and co-operation among them," cannot, and does not, advocate any form of federation which is destructive of, or hostile to, denominational life and existence. It safeguards the autonomy of denominations. It defines its own function. "not so much to do things, as to get the denominational bodies, and the interdenominational movements, to do the work of the churches in coöperation." It "seeks to find the will of the constituent bodies and their departments, and to interpret and express it in common terms."

Toward Local Federations the Federal Council assumes no organic relation, and takes no directive control. It is ready to initiate, inspire, advise and aid by bringing to bear upon

any local situation the accumulating experience of other federative enterprises. It advocates no standard forms or phrases by which federations must be moulded, named or described. It recognizes that the mere mechanics of federation, easy to note and easy to report, are of the least importance,—that ideals, atmosphere and spirit alone are significant.

Distinct Types of Federation

The kinds of federations, and their differing functions, must be more clearly recognized than they hitherto have been. The following distinct forms appear with their varying characteristics:—

1. *National Federations.* The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is essentially an expression of the Protestant Evangelical Church in the geographical area of the nation.

“A World conference on Faith and Order”, which originated in the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1910. seeks to bring all communions, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Protestant alike, into a united fellowship, so as to recover the unity of original Christianity. This movement makes the world its geographical unit.

In different nations of the world there are State Churches. These, however, are so named because of political relations rather than because of geographical bounds and limits.

In America the tendency has been to organize religious bodies, national in extent, but limited to special phases of work, such as for young men, for young women, for Sunday schools, for education, for home and foreign missions, and for similar specialized interests.

By some of these organizations, especially under the stress of war, ministries have been rendered to a greater variety of interests than was proposed, or is involved, in the organization and the name it bears.

The Home Missions Council, altho not itself a missionary agency, coördinates the home mis-

sion agencies of different denominations in the field of common interests, throughout the entire nation and in the dependencies of the nation, such as Alaska, Porto Rico, Cuba, the Philippine Islands, and in part the adjacent nations to the South.

2. *A State Federation.* This is not a combination of entire denominations, nor of local churches. It is a federation of fragments of denominations organized as state bodies. Some of these state bodies are so related to their national, denominational organizations as to be unable to enter into relations with other bodies, unless the plan and policy has the approval of the denominational headquarters. Others have an independence of their national denominations which permits them, as state organizations, to enter into any alliance of their own choosing; and yet, even in such cases, the sanction and coöperation of the denominational leaders, at the national headquarters, are needful for full and satisfactory expression of the principles of fellowship and coöperation within the state; for the function of a state federation is for the most part in the domain of the larger aspects of home missions, such as:—

a. The bestowal of home mission grants with reference to the life and activities of churches. These grants not infrequently reach back into the denominational home mission treasury, and must be in harmony with the plans at headquarters.

b. The assignment of pastors, or the arranging of preaching circuits, or the support of ministers. Here again national, denominational policies are involved.

c. The occupation of new territory, whether by one denomination under agreement, or by several, with due regard each for the other, or by all in the old-fashioned way of scrambling for precedence.

d. The resuscitation of waning churches, either by adequate aid of men and money,

or by combination and consolidation with other churches.

e. A ministry to certain classes, temporarily conditioned, as in the initial days of constructing new industries, or in lumber camps, or along sea coasts, or in the mines, or for foreign speaking peoples of different nationalities.

Sometimes the functioning of a state federation is on the plane of common, social or political ends, in the advocacy of certain legislation, or as the exponent of definite reforms.

But however functioning, only a partial and unsatisfactory career can be expected of a state federation which does not embody, within its utterances and its acts, the principles common to the denominations of whose state organizations it is composed. As an expression of the common Christianity within the geographical unit of the State, it needs to manifest a lateral fellowship, inclusive of all Christians in the state, but also to preserve the lineal inheritances of the different denominations.

3. *A City Federation.* This is a combination of local churches, within the limits of a municipality. Not all churches are independent in their forms of organization and government; many can act only in harmony with and by approval of, their national, ecclesiastical authorities.

A city federation will have too large a program if it undertakes to remedy all the evils incident to city life. A review of the city federations now in existence reveals amongst them a great diversity of objects, and even wider disparity of achievements.

a. Some city federations restrict themselves to purely religious and churchly functions. They conduct Go-to-Church Campaigns; they manage union revival services and evangelistic campaigns; they promote common missionary meetings and missionary study classes; they district the city into parishes, and bring the responsibility of each

local church to bear upon definite streets, and homes, and individuals; they counsel with each other, and support each other in the occupation of defined territory, either in the developing suburbs, or in the congested areas.

b. Some city federations devote themselves almost exclusively to the philanthropic and benevolent features of the church's work; they maintain reading-rooms, homes and shelters for different classes and conditions; they inaugurate playgrounds, and supervise recreation and amusement; they co-ordinate the charities and the philanthropies of the city, supplementing where there is lack, rectifying and reforming where there are abuses; they may devote their attention almost wholly to the drink evil, or the social evil, or the problems of poverty, or iniquities in the treatment of labor,—concerning wages, kinds of employment, hours and housing.

c. Other city federations give themselves almost wholly to the political and legal aspects of communal life, with a view to securing the enforcement of law, the discovery and prevention of corrupt practices, and the passage of needed ordinances.

It may be that in the larger cities denominational interests in the broader national sense are infrequently involved, save in those matters which relate to the assignment of responsible territory, and the establishment and maintenance of mission enterprises. Nevertheless, the interests and the obligations of denominations may at any moment arise, indirectly, if not directly, and in unanticipated ways, and they must not be overlooked or overridden.

4. *Local Federations or Community Churches.* Federations within villages and towns are usually wholly ecclesiastical, that is, they are concerned with the combination of churches, or the realignment of churches. The following types of community churches are clearly recognizable.

a. The Denominational Church may be a community church, for it may receive into its membership all Christians of every name and faith, and may serve all of the interests of the community's life and welfare.

b. Two or more churches, each preserving its distinctive organizations and affiliation with its own denominational organizations, may unite in common, local church functions, under the ministrations of one pastor, and be, for purposes of worship and community service, a single congregation.

c. A single society may be organized, called a church or otherwise, which receives to its membership members of many churches, without requiring them to sever existing relationships, and, in that community, performs, all the functions of a local church, when, in fact, it is an organized body of individuals who are members of other churches.

d. A church may be formed as the only church home of all its members, into which may come every variety of faith and experience, with no obligations to any other ecclesiastical organization.

These four types of community church have been called (a) the Denominational Church, (b) the Multi-Denominational Church, or distinctively, the Federated Church, (c) the Interdenominational Church, or the church of Federated Christians, and (d) the Undenominational Church, or "Union Church," long so-called.

The Community Church Tested

1. *The Union Church* has been tried and tested for many years. It seems in many instances the easiest to form, and undoubtedly it should be formed, provided it be the only type possible within the community. But it is not ideal; its deficiencies are too numerous. It lacks associational fellowship; it lacks outside supervision, from Bishop, Superinten-

dent, Secretary, or other denominational leader; when without a pastor, it can turn to neither an adequate nor approved source of supply; it has no approved literature, and helps create none. It is connected with religious education in no responsible way; it is not large enough to maintain home mission, or foreign mission, enterprises of its own, and without denominational connection, has either no alliance, or the uncertain alliance of "free-lance" missionary movements, and, if deprived of the world vision, it is impoverished in its Christian ideals; frequently it lacks an adequate system of truth; denominational churches may be deficient in this respect, but the Union Church necessarily fails of it; and experience has proven that unhappily the Union Church, with its serious defects, has become socially not a place of unity, but oftentimes of discord and dissension.

When the effort is made, as sometimes it has been, to supply associational fellowship, outside supervision and the other benefits which inhere in denominational churches, then arises a tendency to create a new denomination, the genius and characteristics of which are creedlessness, purely local service, the severance of historic ties and lineal descent, and thereby the repetition of the schism of Protestantism, against which the Union Church itself stands in protest. A state organization of Union Churches, or a national organization of Union Churches, would be equivalent to the creation of a new denomination.

2. *The Interdenominational Church*, or the Church of Federated Christians, is adapted to communities in which residence is transient. In Christobal, the Canal Zone, such a church has been for several years useful. Such a church has been tried in several European cities, under similar conditions, where Christians from many churches in the United States come and find membership during a period of study, or other pursuits, without severing membership in the churches of the home land. Such an organiza-

tion may be useful in many communities in which there are people who, for a variety of considerations, desire to retain connection with the home church in distant places, and yet enter into the fellowship of a local body for the purposes of worship and local service. This is essentially the "Liberty Church" which, during the war, was organized by the Joint Committee on War Production Communities in new industrial centers. Reasons which justify this type may be stated as follows:—

- a. A brief period of residence.
- b. Convictions and customs too positive and too sacred to permit severance from the church of early choice, which adequately embodies these preferences and beliefs.
- c. Lack of time for the development of appreciation and sympathy for new forms unto which soul-commitment would be necessary in case of entire transference to a new church body, or into a new group of ecclesiastical associations.

It is altogether likely that regular denominational churches would be wise to receive into their membership, as "associate members," or otherwise, persons who could not see the way quite clear to sever, all at once, connection with home churches. While this practice would materially swell the list of non-resident members, a list already far too large, yet it would have a double advantage. (1) It would permit a kind of trial membership, in which acquaintance and fellowship might have time to ripen; and (2) in small communities it would enable the denominational church readily to make trial of that breadth of fellowship and inclusiveness which would fit it the better to serve as a Community Church.

3. *The Federated Church*, or the Multi-Denominational Church, has been proven well adapted to many communities all across the continent, in increasingly numerous instances. This is a union of two or more ecclesiastical organizations under one pastor,

usually in one meeting-house, as one congregation, with common local functions, but with separate denominational associations and allegiances. The following variations and characteristics appear:—

a. It is a form of federation, when one pastor serves two or more churches in the same, or adjacent, communities. The principle of federation is the more marked when the churches are of different denominations.

b. In some communities the congregations of different churches unite in the support of one pastor, and combine as one congregation meeting in rotation in the different meeting-houses. The period of rotation may be week by week, month by month, quarter by quarter, or, in some cases, determined by the condition of the church property or the ease of heating, the winter season over against the summer season, moving from meeting-house to meeting-house as the seasons change.

c. In some instances all services are held in one meeting-house and the other house, or the other meeting-houses are sold, or are used for parish purposes. In one community an unused meeting-house was given over to work for young people, and soon a Young Men's Christian Association, not previously existing in the town, was organized and domiciled in the unused house of worship.

d. When property is sold or transferred, the federation takes some permanent form, for the sale or transfer of titles usually involves steps which cannot be retraced. Either the denominational churches, one or more, legally organized, hold the property, or the federation itself, properly organized, may become incorporated under the laws of the state, as owner of, or custodian of, the property.

e. Associational relationships are kept up, each church with its own higher body, through delegated representation, regular

statistical reports, and regular contributions for denominational benevolences; for each church retains its own distinct organization, holds its own annual and other stated meetings for ecclesiastical and legal purposes.

f. Statistical returns are equitably adjusted, either by dividing total attendances by the number of churches federated, or by the continued ratios of the numbers attending before federation took place, or by an actual poll of the individuals, with an expression of denominational preference. Of course membership returns are simple because of official action in the enrollment of members.

g. In the accession of new members courtesy and comity must prevail. There have been instances in which new members were received into the federation, and not into either of the separate churches of which the federation was composed. This, however, is a practice not to be commended, for such a federation tends to become an entirely new ecclesiastical organization; and thereby multiplies the competing church bodies, which it was designed to reduce in number. The kindly spirit of Christian consideration usually discovers the proper way for adjusting membership on the basis either of preference, family ties, or acquaintance and alliance.

h. Benevolences for the separate denominational treasuries may be apportioned by designation of the individual donors, or in accordance with a percentage of distribution agreed upon, or by being taken upon different days, or at different times in the same service, or by being placed in separate receptacles,—envelopes, baskets, or boxes, denominationally inscribed. The spirit of fraternity usually discovers the most acceptable method, best adapted to local conditions. That such contributions be kept up is most important, for otherwise, in the federation, individual members will lose the sense of

obligation, and consequently the sacrificial fellowship in the mind of Christ, which makes the church of Christ a messenger of the Gospel "to every creature," will disappear.

4. *The Denominational Church* is the best type of community church, when it can receive into its membership all the Christians of the community. The federation of Christians in their own hearts has no superior form.

a. The denominational church is best, because it preserves, as no other can, the inheritances of the past, and is allied, as no new organization can be, with the agencies for all the varied and far-reaching ministrations of the church, in this and other lands.

b. A denominational church is more tenacious of life than any other kind. Because its roots reach into the past, because it bears a name which others in other places know and cherish, because its absent members, in other churches of the same name, can retain connection with it through denominational associations, because of oversight and supervision, and fellowship and inspiration, from denominational agents and agencies, it has helps and encouragement for life and development which no other enjoys.

c. In many cases members of different denominations have willingly enrolled themselves under the standard of one denomination, for the sake of uniting all Christians in a small community for common tasks and common worship. This, if a sacrifice, is the sacrificial spirit which has great reward. Doubtless one of the greatest needs to-day is that individual Christians should forego many of their personal preferences, for the sake of that unity which will strengthen the testimony and the service of the Christian church.

d. Many denominational churches, situated in the small community, awakening to

the sense of responsibility to the community, in which not more than one church can properly, flourish, have reconstructed themselves, voluntarily, both as regards spirit, and as regards forms, in order to make themselves a church home for every individual Christian in the community, and in order to make themselves an effective instrument for the welfare of all within the community.

Reciprocal Exchanges

In some states denominations, for the sake of establishing single denominational churches within small communities, have entered into an agreement to exchange partial interests in certain communities, for the sake of acquiring exclusive interests in certain other communities. Under this agreement denomination "A" surrenders to denomination "B" in town "X" all its church interests, and denomination "B" surrenders to denomination "A" all its church interest in town "Y", so that, in consequence of this reciprocal exchange, denomination "A" has the entire field in Town "Y", and denomination "B" has the entire field in town "X"; and from that time on town "Y" and town "X" each have a single denominational church, which then undertakes to serve the community as a Community Church.

This plan of reciprocal exchanges, first proposed in the State of Maine in 1905, and conspicuously approved in the State of Utah in 1915, has received many trials, and is coming now into much more clearly recognized and common use.

This principle of "give and take" establishes a sense of fair play, of equity and justice, which makes the task easier for all concerned. Those who surrender, do so the more readily, when they realize that by their sacrifices members of their own order gain an equal advantage in some other community. Denominational leaders and agents more readily yield advantage at one point, when they understand that they acquire advantage at another

point; and that denominational statistics will receive compensations in gains to offset the losses.

Common Social Functions

The element of justice in reciprocal exchanges is not overlooked, for all churches, of whatever denomination, have certain common functions within a community.

1. The local church is a social center for acquaintance and friendship, where the human touch prevails.

2. The local church, however small, is nevertheless a great educational institution, in which the proclamation of truth, the explanation of the principles of life, and the inculcation of personal duties are constant themes.

3. The local church, however meagerly equipped it may be, is yet a place of worship, where the deepest and most profound emotions are stirred, in the sense of awe, and in expressions of adoration and praise.

4. The local church is a means of ministry and service unto the community,— the combination of Christians in united good will and good deeds.

Practical Steps Toward Community Interests

Each movement must fit its own area. Mere imitation entails failure. Community churches cannot be imported ready-made. They cannot be imposed from without; they must grow up from within.

1. The initiative may begin with an individual, who invites others to a conference, or who proposes in his denominational gathering that a committee be appointed to confer with representatives of other denominations, invited thereto.

2. Several conferences may be needful. In them may be determined the wide sweep of the movement or its self-imposed limits, its

personnel, its constituent membership, and, in general, the main objects to be attained.

3. The official endorsement of the bodies concerned must usually be secured. A federation in a large area is not the voluntary organization of individuals acting upon their own responsibility, but a representative body composed of delegates appointed by churches, denominational organizations, or their duly authorized officers.

4. So many objects are desirable, so many good achievements seem possible, when Christians are united, that the danger constantly confronting a newly formed organization is to lay out a too extensive program, and undertake to accomplish all at once too many worthy tasks. Parsimony in aims should be practiced, else disappointment and discouragement soon ensue.

5. The question of expense at once arises. The entire time of a special representative appears desirable. Central offices, with suitable equipment, and an office staff; printed literature in great variety; classes and lectures, and other means of awakening and guiding public sentiment, all of which involve expense, occur as needful. But desirability and need are not the only considerations. The resources of a federation must not be too heavily taxed, lest they be drained. The history of federations shows failures and wrecks due to an excessive burden of expense. Federations should seldom incur expense for work which other organizations are doing, or may do.

6. To home mission treasuries state federations should save expense by reducing needless competition and wasteful appropriations. In local communities, served by Community Churches, the principle of federation is economical, for it eliminates duplication of effort, concentrates congregations, and saves wasteful rivalry. The economies of federation, however, are not its highest justification; but the spiritual ends, which are attained through efficiency, inspiration, and power.

Some Local Adjustments

Within a local community in the formation of a Community Church, the questions most frequently occasioning pause, and even occurring as obstacles, relate to the place, the name and the man.

1. *The place.* Custom and habit, records of spiritual conquests within the sub-conscious self, hold men tenaciously to fixed places, and even to definite attitudes and postures. Many a saint finds it difficult to worship at all in a strange place. The very pew, and the end of the seat, after a while seem sacred. It is not easy to change and resort to an unaccustomed place of prayer.

2. *The name.* To many people names are more than symbols. Not only are inheritances and associations represented by the name, but also creeds and convictions; and, consequently, a change of name often seems to be the unsettlement of faith.

3. *The man.* Most of our religious experiences are associated with others. Mother, Sunday School teacher, and pastor, have brought to us counsel and guidance in moments of spiritual need; and have pointed out paths, and held aloft ideals, which have claimed our deepest consecration. The faithful pastor of a Christian church stands in peculiar relations to all its members. No easy thing is it to relinquish his leadership, and turn to the care of a stranger.

In the adjustment of local church relations, looking toward the formation of a single community church, these three considerations, more often than any others, arise to block progress. Questions of creed are seldom as important as are these:— Where shall we worship? What shall be our name? Who shall be pastor? Usually the church which makes concession as to place reasonably expects a reciprocal concession in regard to the name, or the selection of a pastor. A middle ground, frequently acceptable, in the case of two churches, is for one to

yield its place of worship, the other to make the greatest concessions respecting the new name, and for them both, letting former pastors retire, to unite in calling a new pastor.

Sometimes the agreement is made to alternate under the pastoral care of ministers of the different denominations, each for a fixed period of service,—one year, or more, as agreed upon. This plan has the disadvantages of keeping an unsatisfactory man too long, and of arbitrarily dismissing a good man too soon. In some cases a pastor is sought from a denomination not represented in the federation, so that all the members of the coöperating churches shall be equally related to the new pastor. But all these adjustments of details must be determined by each community with due regard to its own conditions and peculiarities. Where the spirit of charity and courtesy most largely prevails there the adjustment will be easiest and most harmonious.

Acquaintance and Experimentation

In many communities, in which the form of procedure is not immediately plain, it is often desirable to hold union services, either of the mid-week meeting or of the Sunday evening meeting, or even of the Sunday morning service,—union services for a period of time, possibly the winter through, or for a single month, or for three months. Such union services may be regarded purely as an experiment, with no definite commitment on the part of any church, or any individual.

The experiment may go farther and take the character of an agreement to hold all Sunday services in one meeting-house, and all week day services in another house, for a month, three months, or even a year, with the distinct understanding that, if the plan is not agreeable, at the end of the period, each church may resume its former separate activities, without disturbing good will and mutual esteem. Indeed the experiment may do more, or less, than indicated, exactly as local conditions may war-

rant. Whatever promotes acquaintance, respect and good will among Christians, and an earnest consideration of the problems of social welfare in the community, will bring Christians into closer coöperation, and will the better enable them to extend the borders of the Master's Kingdom.

The Scope of Consultation

Local Federations have failed oftentimes, even to obtain a good beginning, for one of these reasons:— (1) Too great haste. Enthusiastic advocates of federation may push the project too fast, so that time has not been allowed for everyone, particularly those who move slowly, to think out and understand the project from all sides, its disadvantages, as well as its advantages (2) Selfishness and lack of fairness. Sometimes it has happened, under the cloak of forming a federation, that one church, or some person, undertakes, by a clever trick, to gain denominational or personal advantage. Such a spirit, if even once suspected, vitiates and nullifies the whole movement. (3) Outside parties. Sometimes former residents, who do not now know present conditions, interject irrelevant and disturbing considerations. Sometimes denominational agents mindful of denominational claims, resist and bring to naught a movement, which has not duly recognized their rights.

It is wise to take time; it is wise to consult outside parties who may be interested; it is particularly wise to consult with denominational agents, when planning for a community church. If they are not consulted early, and if they do not approve it, the plan, which may have been agreed upon within the community itself, may be upset by their influence and control, and rightly too. The approval of Superintendent, or Secretary, or Home Missionary, having jurisdiction, is essential because it is desirable to retain all of the denominational ties, in order to keep the Christians of the community true to their honest ecclesiastical

obligations, and vitally coöperating with all of the great missionary enterprises of their denominations. It is well to take time for all of these conferences and consultations. It is better to confer first, than afterward; and it is better to have no federation at all than to have one which fails of its purpose, resulting in discord and discontent, rather than harmony and good will.

The Great Desideratum

The great desideratum indeed the only worthy motive for the formation of federations, is to promote spiritual life, to spread the Kingdom of Christ, and to make manifest its realization among men, and in all human relations. The task of promoting federations is larger than simply winning consent to a formulated program, however ideal. No standardized names or forms are needful. Ideals and finished products, of inestimable value as visions and aims, are nevertheless, for practical and permanent results, not so important as may be some crude, and but partially organized federation, which fits its community, enlists the support of the people, and grows up out of a conscious recognition of local needs and possibilities, accompanied with the consecrated determination to serve God and man well in that locality.